

Indicator RECOMMENDED	Percent of High School Students Reporting Any Use of Specific Classes of Illicit Drugs in Their Lifetime
Justification	<p>Use of classes of illicit drugs included here has varying degrees of negative physical and psychological effects. Chronic drug use can lead to dependence and serious medical conditions. Both chronic and occasional use can result in serious medical conditions stemming from the drug itself, the method of drug administration, or the use of contaminated equipment.</p>
Definition	<p>Percent of students in grades 9 through 12 reporting using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • cocaine • inhalants • steroids • methamphetamine • ecstasy (MDMA) • heroin • any drugs via injection <p>one or more times during the lifetime (each category assessed separately)</p>
Data Source	Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance System (YRBSS), Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)
Frequency	Biennial
Geographic Levels	State
Demographic Categories	Grade Level, Gender, and Race/Ethnicity
Strengths	<p>Prevalence rates of lifetime use are higher and more stable than for current use. Due to the rarity of their use and the potentially serious consequences of use among adolescents, lifetime use measures for adolescents are appropriate for these substances. The YRBSS is the only national source that currently provides state-level prevalence estimates on lifetime use of specific categories of illicit drugs and among high school student. YRBSS estimates are typically based on larger samples than the National Survey on Drug Use and Health, and can be further broken down by grade level, gender, and race/ethnicity. Some states also collect YRBSS data for individual communities or school districts, which can be compared with their state-level data.</p>
Limitations	<p>Lifetime users include persons who have used substances only once or on rare occasions, and may not reflect current risk. As of 2003, weighted representative samples were only available for 32 states. Not all states participate, and some participating states do not provide representative samples. YRBSS is a school-based survey, so students who have dropped out of school are not represented. It is also subject to bias due to self-report, non-coverage (refusal by selected schools to participate), and non-response (refusal/no answer). Estimates for some demographic subgroups may have relatively low precision (i.e., large confidence intervals).</p>